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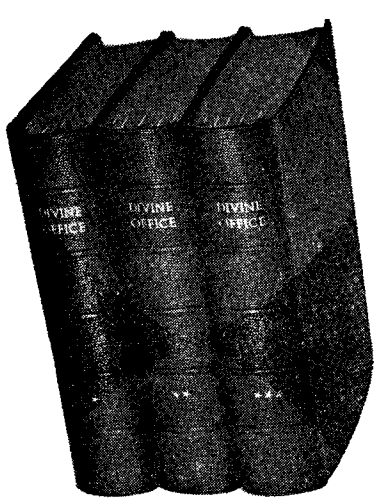

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Progress and a Cloud

THE SECOND Vatican Council, one might observe, has gone through as many moods as sessions. The first session opened on a note of widepread pessimism, but when it became apparent that a majority of the Fathers favored genuine renewal the dominant spirit became one of astounded surprise. The second session was marked by a cautious optimism, though interspersed with wild fluctuations between ecstasy and despair. So far, the third session has seen a more confident optimism: rumors of impending doom are rare, stories of curial power plays few, and the progressive forces vocal and well organized.

Though the reasons for this change are many, one of the most important is undoubtedly the emergence of the American hierarchy as a force of some consequence. Early in the Council many predicted that the direction chosen by the Americans could well be decisive; the question was: which way would they go? The third session has given the American bishops their greatest opportunity to show their mettle, and so far they have done extraordinarily well. On three issues in particular they have made their weight felt: religious liberty, ecumenism (including the separate matter of the Church's stance toward the Jewish people), and the place of the laity. This is altogether fitting, for it is in these areas that the American Catholic experience has been so instructive. American pluralism has shown the value of complete religious liberty, just as it has shown (though by no means perfectly) the possibility of a healthy Jewish-Christian relationship free of a virulent anti-Semitism.

The matter of the layman's place in the Church is a rather different situation. Apart from the ill-fated trustee episode in the late 18th and early 19th century, the layman's position has been one of obscure passivity. Though there has been much talk in recent years of a deeper appreciation of the spiritual dignity of the laity, as well as a widespread tolerance of lay criticism, the structures of the American Church have undergone little change. For all practical purposes, the layman is still an outsider. Nonetheless, the emergence of a well educated body of laity in America has shown in a graphic way the dangerous inadequacy of most traditional thinking on the layman's role. It is in this country that the issue of lay freedom has become most pressing.

HENCE, it is of first importance that the American bishops have been among those most critical of the draft schema on the laity. That schema, from all reports (no one of course showed it to *us*), is totally inadequate. Cardinal Ritter, for one, called it clerical in emphasis, juridical in tone, diffuse in its style and patronizing in approach. He was joined by Bishop Stephen Leven of San Antonio who went so far as to propose that each diocese have a lay senate to advise the bishop. (In essence, that is hardly a radical proposal, but in the context of the Council it must be accounted as a bold idea.)

Just how effective these complaints and suggestions will be remains to be seen. However, the fact that so many bishops, from all parts of the world, were critical of the lay schema must be taken as a good sign. Archbishop Eugene D'Souza of Bhopal, India, put the matter perfectly: "The Church must declericalize its attitudes and bishops must be told to treat laymen as brothers." And it was Bishop Alexander Carter of Sault Sainte Marie in Canada who pointed out the necessity of bringing a lay voice actively to bear on a rewriting of the draft schema. He observed that the original schema had been put together by a Commission entirely clerical in composition, and characterized this as an "absurd situation." That was a modest understatement.

There is enough in these developments to encourage any man. Were it not for one sudden cloud on the horizon, the progressive majority might well feel justified in indulging in a little triumphalism. But there is a cloud, and that is the reported decision

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to have the draft statement on the Jews revised by a subcommission drawn from the Secretariat on Christian Unity and from Cardinal Ottaviani's theological commission. Just what this means is not clear at the moment. A first impression, however, is that those conservatives opposing a strong statement have scored a major comeback. If so, it is a comeback which could not have taken place without the active assistance of Pope Paul VI—for the majority of the Council Fathers have gone on record in opposition to a lukewarm statement. Once again, the world will have to wait; but it can, with some justice, hesitate to leap to panicky conclusions. More than one supposed conservative triumph has turned out otherwise in the end.

A Fragmenting Bloc

URGENCY MARKED the first conference of nonaligned nations held three years ago at Belgrade. To many of the participants at that meeting the nuclear stalemate between the United States and Russia appeared about to resolve itself—in general annihilation. But in 1964, the urgency has gone; thanks to the test-ban treaty and the emergence of China and France as the gadflies of East and West the possibility of a headlong collision of nuclear blocs seems somewhat removed. The pressure is off; and when the pressure is off, so runs one of the oldest maxims of politics, alliances tend to dissolve.

Such proved the case last week in Cairo where the heads of nonaligned nations gathered for their second "summit" conference. The conference's final resolutions read pretty much like Belgrade's; but as usual the real story was elsewhere. It was, to begin with, in the Urubah Palace, four miles from Cairo, where Congolese Premier Moise Tshombe was acting out an episode designed more for a film festival than an international meeting. It was, secondly, in the pages of Al Ahram, the newspaper voice of Egypt's President Nasser; Al Ahram printed a four-page supplement on Malaysia, a symbol of the rebuff which a majority of conference participants gave to the aggressive "Chinese line" of Indonesia's Sukarno.

The emergence of China as an ideological force in the three years since Belgrade led to a strange sort of verbal balancing in the nonaligned nations' resolutions: the former colonial powers and the United States are played off against China while the Soviet Union enjoys an unimpeachable middle position! But this verbal symmetry may prove to be no more than verbal, for the split between moderates and Peking-oriented nations at the conference was real. Sukarno was isolated; and the declaration

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supporting peaceful coexistence and demanding that all nations adhere to the test-ban treaty was obviously not a reference to the U.S. or U.S.S.R.

The Tshombe incident also encouraged division among the Cairo participants. In responding to the Egyptian action (which had been promoted by Algeria) Congolese propaganda mills ground out the old image of the Arabs as slavers, a scar on the history of Africa which will do nothing for that continent's vaunted unity. Similarly, moderate African nations like Nigeria were reportedly fearful that the Tshombe incident demonstrated an increasing tendency of nonaligned countries to interfere in the internal politics of their neighbors.

Without a dramatic issue around which to rally, the "third world" seems to be fragmentizing in the same way the Eastern and Western blocs have. Regional problems constantly cropped up at Cairo: India vs. China; Cambodia vs. Vietnam; Cuba vs. the U.S.; Egypt vs. Israel; Indonesia vs. Malaysia. The significance of this is not yet clear. In a world badly in need of unity, fragmentation is no cause for glee. On the other hand, the Cairo participants did not so much "split" as each go his own way in pursuit of individual national interests. The kind of division seen at Cairo may mean that substantive political and economic issues (e.g., the survival of the Congo as a unified nation) in particular countries can be dealt with more pragmatically, unencumbered by the cloudier forms of ideology.

F.B.I. Report

IT IS always a great comfort to bypass the actual complexities of a situation and blame everything on Communism. For this reason, whenever a tense social situation explodes, the conservative school of thought in this country can be counted on to ignore the real situation and write off the disturbance as a Communist creation. This is true whether the subject is Panamanians and the Canal, San Francisco students and the House Un-American Activities Committee, or Negroes and civil rights. The Un-American Activities Committee yielded to the same impulse again recently in a clumsy report attempting to tie civil rights groups to the Communist Party.

J. Edgar Hoover is solidly within this tradition. After the San Francisco riots, he warned darkly that the Communists were trying to subvert the Un-American Activities Committee, although the evidence shows that the few Communists involved were simply along for the ride. It is all the more remarkable, then, that Mr. Hoover's recent report on racial disturbance departed from the usual conservative line. He did, of course, find a small group of Marxist-Leninists trying to exploit the situation, but discovered no convenient scapegoat, Communist or otherwise, nor any evidence of an overarching conspiracy. A small favor, but considering the source, we should be grateful.

Mr. Hoover's defection from right-thinking conservatism is even more serious, as William F. Buckley notes in his syndicated column. Mr. Buckley tries to cover Mr. Hoover's tracks by suggesting that the F.B.I. had not undertaken an inquiry of sufficient scope to show whether Communists had *prepared* Negroes to take the law into their own hands, although the Communists might not have been directly involved themselves. So conservatives may rest easy—Mr. Buckley has assured them that a conspiratorial view may still be compatible with Mr. Hoover's deviationist findings. But the unkindest cut is yet to come. Mr. Buckley "reads with surprise" Mr. Hoover's rather obvious finding that social and economic conditions have demoralized the American Negro to the point where many are ready for uprisings. Mr. Buckley complains that the F.B.I., as a fact-finding organization, should not deal in social and political conclusions. That the social plight of the Negro may be one of the facts to be found in any half-way competent investigation of Negro riots apparently does not have much appeal.

At this point, however, we feel a twinge of sympathy for Mr. Buckley. When he goes on to argue against Mr. Hoover's plug for the anti-poverty campaign, in the midst of a fact-finding report (and in the midst of a presidential campaign), we think he is on sound ground. There is nothing wrong with coming out in favor of the Johnson war on poverty, but it is not for Mr. Hoover to do so in a report on civil rights disturbances. We wouldn't have believed it six months ago, but acting on Mr. Buckley's tip, we had better keep an eye out for liberal propaganda in future F.B.I. reports.

Fruits of a Policy

THE QUESTIONS we raised early last spring about the character and effectiveness of Washington's Cuba policy seem more pertinent than ever today. If the Johnson Administration has not been willing to take the political risks involved in re-examining its present isolation-embargo tactics, after the election it could be far less fearful about doing so. Fidel Castro himself is manifesting an increasing willingness to negotiate.

The hardships fastened upon the Cuban people by the American embargo have been greatly aggravated this year by a drastic fall in the price of sugar (cutting Cuba's foreign exchange) and poor

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harvests of the island's other farm commodities. In the Cuban cities the monthly quota allotted to the aged and infirm, and to children up to eight years of age, is one chicken; four eggs a month is the ration for Cuban city dwellers. And there are severe shortages of native starchy foods and of cooking oil. To conclude that the resulting hardships will lead to Castro's overthrow is to ignore the evidence of the increasing number of Western journalists who are permitted to observe local conditions and city and country attitudes.

To hamper subversion in other Latin American countries served as the second objective of the embargo policy. But ever since the missile crisis Castro's popularity in the other Americas has been on the wane. In Venezuela and other lands where his agents have committed or inspired acts of violence, their incursions have aroused national resentments. The danger of chaos or Communism in Latin America clearly lies not in the machinations of Castro agitators but in the impending failure of the local possessing classes, the United States companies on the scene, and Washington itself to effect changes that will meet the tide of rising expectations there and enable the various peoples to achieve humanly acceptable living standards.

Since Washington's present policy imposes grave hardships upon the Cuban people without furthering either one of its objectives, a change is imperative. Castro is now restive about his economic dependence on Soviet Russia, estimated for non-military items alone at some three hundred million dollars a year. His trade with Spain is rapidly growing, and he seeks to extend Cuba's commerce with Britain, France, Japan and others in the free world. Significantly, at Cairo the resolution demanding abandonment of America's Guantanamo naval base was modified to a simple call for negotiations.

All this is hardly to imply that Castro has suddenly become a democrat, or that he is even entitled to be considered among the non-aligned. The fact that a quota for sales of Cuban sugar to this country continues to be given a special "global quota, but not authorized" category (even though the latest tariff bill cuts this about in half) points to a certain official hope that the embargo on trade with Cuba will be only temporary. In any case, after the election, Washington should not delay finding out what Castro has to offer as a basis for resumed negotiations.

National Catholic Reporter

ON ITS fourth birthday, the *Catholic Reporter* of Kansas City is about to become a parent. It will give birth to an enterprise of great importance for Catholic publishing and the Church in America. It will be known as the *National Catholic Reporter,* the first attempt by a weekly Catholic newspaper to report in depth the life of the Church for a large national audience. Robert Hoyt and Michael Greene of the current *Catholic Reporter* will be editor and publisher, respectively, under the directorship of a non-profit lay corporation. Subscriptions are six dollars a year, P.O. Box 1037, Kansas City, Mo.

HERE AND THERE

A Suggestion for Mr. Waugh

IT IS a pity that Mr. Evelyn Waugh is so famously unsympathetic to the liturgical reforms of the Vatican Council and the introduction of the vernacular into the divine services. For who better than he could put the Latin prayers into the lofty English they deserve? It may be asking too much to solicit Mr. Waugh's aid for such a project, however, for he has made it painfully clear that he prefers the mediocre Latin he has grown used to over the mediocre English he will soon have to suffer, if not gladly, at least with resignation.

Still, if we are going to have English in the liturgy, and we are, even the testy Mr. Waugh, who can be counted on to agree that it should be good English, might put aside his personal predilections for the task that only he or one of the very few other stylists with gifts comparable to his must do for the good of the English-speaking Catholic world.

It made little difference that the Latin of the liturgy was not language of a high order, since few understood it anyway. But harshness or infelicity in a liturgical language which is also the language of the people is something else again. If the former incomprehension led to boredom and daydreaming in church, as it undoubtedly did for millions not gifted with Trappist contemplative powers who found the Mass a mystery of a kind not intended by its Founder, the misuse of one's native tongue under such solemn conditions can be jarring.

What we need for the vernacular liturgy, then, is not transliterated Latin which reads like a schoolboy's Caesar exercises but vigorous, sinewy English that does its work in communicating divine ideas and religious sentiments in accordance with its own genius. In short, the kind of English Mr. Waugh knows how to write.

The new liturgical language need not suggest that it

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is the product of another age, on the one hand, or of literalist timidity, on the other. In the hands of a modern master, it can speak with eloquence and style to contemporary man—as Winston Churchill, dealing with questions of life and death and the high aspirations of the human spirit, has spoken. Mr. Waugh is such a master—so won't someone who has the authority beg him to stop the grumbling and put aside his present favorite posture of premature old age, so the job can be done?

This may be difficult and require a forwardness not commonly found even among archbishops. But Mr. Waugh himself has never been lacking in what our Jewish brethren call *chutzbah*. He should be ready to understand and even to forgive if he finds it in others.

Mr. Waugh's most recent public complaints were found in one of his old-man-in-a-pet letters to the Editor of the London *Catholic Herald*. In it he reaffirms the devotion to *Romanitá* expressed earlier in a letter to THE COMMONWEAL. "Of course," he wrote to the *Catholic Herald*, "it is possible to have the Faith without *Romanitá* and to have *Romanitá* without the Faith, but as a matter of recorded history the two have kept very close." And then, in a magnificent *non-sequitur*, he immediately followed this with: "'Peter has spoken' remains the guarantee of orthodoxy." Apparently, the Petrine supremacy is not only the test of orthodoxy but part-and-parcel of *Romanitá*—or is it that *Romanitá* is part-and-parcel of the papal primacy? *Ubi est Petrus, ibi est Romanitá*? Or is it *Ubi est Romanitá, ibi est Petrus*?

One would gather from this that before there can be any hope of converting Africa or the Orient to Catholicity, or indeed of re-converting the post-Christian West, they must first be converted, or re-converted, to *Romanitá*. Of course the movement in the Vatican Council is quite in the other direction. For the majority of Fathers of the Council recognize that attempts in the past to impose an alien culture, even the incomparable *Romanitá*, as the price of the Faith have turned out badly. There is no reason to believe that the time is more ripe now, when "imperialism" is under attack throughout the world. Nor is there reason to believe that the same price can be exacted for the preservation of the Faith where it already has roots. A Faith practically indistinguishable from *Romanitá* can survive as a kind of cult or fashionable sect in the modern world—or as a clerical subculture, as it does in some places. But what promise does it hold out for the universal mission of the Church? Must the world repeal its recent history before the Church has anything of significance to say to it, other than to point out its errors and wring its hands in despair over its waywardness?

The fact that the Faith is intimately bound up with the idea that the Pope of Rome is the visible head of the Church does not in itself canonize *Romanitá*. A black man from the hills of Africa surrounded by Oriental cardinals could sit in Peter's Chair and the doctrine of papal primacy would not be touched. If anything, what has to be made clear is that the Holy Father is the vicar of Christ on earth, not the leader of a cultural force set on universal conquest. At the same time, Catholics have to be reminded that they are not sent forth as conquerors or even as custodians of a particular provincial civilization but to be the "salt of the earth" and the "leaven in the loaf" wherever they might find themselves.

Mr. Waugh of course is correct in noting that historically the Faith and *Romanitá* have been kept close—especially if one wants to eliminate most of the Christian centuries and concentrate on the last four and if one wants to accent the disciplinary canons and bureaucratic directives and pass over the actual life led by millions of Catholics who have worked out their salvation under cultural conditions quite removed from the graces of *Romanitá*. But has not the historical identification of *Romanitá* and the Faith been as much a handicap as a help, especially in these latter days? Isn't that one of the problems the Vatican Council was charged with resolving? After all, it was a Pope of Rome, not some disaffected heretic from the cultural bush, who first called for *aggiornamento*.

Romanitá has not been succeeding very well even in the places where it would appear to be most congenially situated. The recent record of the Latin countries in preserving the Faith among their people is not impressive by any means. Elsewhere, even in the West, it has been a handicap. In the Anglo-Saxon nations, for example, Catholicism has made its voice heard to the extent that it has thrown off many of the characteristic notes of *Romanitá*.

Mr. Waugh, whose voice has been a strong one, is himself a good example of this. He has been a powerful influence precisely because he has been a *contemporary* writer. His professional accents have been those of a modern man, however much he may enjoy his private antiquarianism, and it would be hard to imagine anything further from the spirit of *Romanitá* than his own memorable works. The English Catholic writers who earnestly permeated their work with the "Roman" spirit, rather after the manner in which they decked out their chapels with Italian Madonnas, on the contrary, talked only to each other and were quickly forgotten.

I CAN NOT forget an experience in Rome itself a few years ago. I told the story to Michael Novak, who repeated it in his book *The Open Church*. An ecclesiastic came back from a trip to North and South America. He had unhappy impressions of the Catholicism he found in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco and elsewhere in the States. He was delighted with what he found in South America. I could not understand this and asked him if it were not true that the churches in the United States were prospering, while those in South America were short on vocations, short on support, and

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short on attendance. "All very true," he said, "but in South America, the doctrine is so pure!"

He did not mean that the Yankees were touched with heresy or theological deviation. What he meant, rather, was that there was a sharper sense of *Romanitá* among the *Latinos,* at least among the clergy. The crowded Masses in the States, the long lines of people receiving Holy Communion, the vast parochial school system, the extraordinary theological literacy among ordinary people, the large number of people called to the priestly and religious vocation—these things counted for little, in the absence of the "Roman" spirit.

What jars many Americans in Rome, I have noted, is almost the opposite. The outward expressions of Catholicism are everywhere and are frequently charming, but the gap between the "official" ecclesiasticism of the professionals and the daily life of the people is striking. Most of the clerics live according to the canons of *Romanitá* while their parishioners are caught up in the "modern" civilization which Mr. Waugh has so magnificently satirized in his best books. The result is a separation between religion and life—a dangerous lack of communication between priests and people—and the uneasy coexistence of two worlds, the one the safe, super-orthodox, syllogistic universe of the official Church, and the other the restless, uncertain life of the popular Church, the life led by the Catholic people of the city who are caught up in modernity and buffeted by the winds of change.

The result, for the preservation of the Faith, can be serious indeed. For example, Italy, the most "Catholic" of countries, has the largest Communist Party in Western Europe. Rome, the center of Catholicism, produces so few priests for its own parishes that they must be imported from elsewhere. If five Romans a year are ordained for the mother diocese, it is hailed as a shower of graces. The intellectual life of Italy is dominated by anticlericals, Marxists, and religious skeptics. Catholicism is no more acceptable in the universities than Zen Buddhism. The *Romanitá* jealously guarded in the ecclesiastical bureaus and theological colleges simply does not touch the life of the people—even in its natural home.

If, as his communications suggest, Mr. Waugh believes that the *aggiornamento* which he deplores amounts to a diminution of the beloved *Romanitá,* I believe he is right. Where I disagree is that this is a false step. I take it that he believes the Church should cling to its old ways—and so much worse for the giddy world that refuses to stand with it. There might be some strength to this argument if the Church were not charged with a missionary and pastoral assignment. But to have ignored the situation much longer would have effectively reduced the Church of Christ, in time, to a sect of cultural custodians and the clergy to the equivalent of convent chaplains tending the gardens of piety while the People of God were left without direction.

As Jacques Maritain wrote many years ago: "The end of *a* world is not the end of *the* world." That is as true of *Romanitá* as it is of the Patristic period.

In his communication to the *Catholic Herald,* Mr. Waugh added a few churlish remarks about the changes in the Liturgy. They are, said the gallant defender of *Romanitá,* not only downright "un-English" but offensively Teutonic. "We seek no '*Sieg Heils*' We pray in silence. . . . If the Germans want to be noisy, let them. But why should they disturb our devotions? . . . By all means let the rowdy have their 'dialogues,' but let us who value silence be not completely forgotten."

All but four of the Fathers of the Council voted for the changes which Mr. Waugh finds so offensive. Presumably there was a goodly number of British bishops and others among them. The changes, then, can hardly be blamed exclusively on the Germans. And in any case, to tie in the actions of an Ecumenical Council with the vulgarities of Nazism is more than ill-mannered; it is impertinence that even Mr. Waugh's age and distinction do not license. Indeed, one is left to wonder, after reading this strange outburst, what Mr. Waugh thinks the Mass is anyway—a backdrop performance to situate the mood for silent "devotions," doing the service that is done by soft lights and stained glass windows? Mr. Waugh knows better than that. He knows that the Mass is essentially a social act and that the worshippers in attendance are not there as isolated individuals but as a community of prayer. His sentimental notion of the priest and acolyte at Mass as a "craftsman and his apprentice; a man with a job which he alone (is) qualified to do" is indeed *Romanitá* gotten all out of hand. It must in charity be attributed to polemical zeal rather than theological ignorance.

"That is the Mass," he stated in closing his letter, "I have grown to know and love." It is one version of the Mass, to be sure, with its Manor House notion of the celebrant as a high-level servitor tidying up the spiritual premises of his masters. But it is not the Mass the Liturgical Decree was concerned with when the Pope and the Fathers of Vatican II solemnly proclaimed the changes to which Mr. Waugh objects. It was not "rowdiness" they canonized but the sense of Christian community, given expression in the central act of worship. That community includes all the People of God, including the strong-lunged Germans, the reticent English and the bumptious Americans. Whether he likes it or not, Mr. Waugh is not alone. Especially in church.

Though the use of the word "craft" in connection with the word "priest" in his letter is not the happiest of Mr. Waugh's constructions, it did suggest that his own superb "craft" is needed for all the Masses that the English-speaking millions of his less talented brethren will participate in, through the long years ahead. He can make full amends for that ill-mannered and ill-conceived letter, then, by performing for all of us "the job which he alone is qualified to do."

JOHN COGLEY

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A Memoir on the Birth Pangs of Twentieth-Century Catholicism

Maisie Ward's Journey

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

A WOMAN of my generation who lives across the street, having dutifully bowed to Shakespeare, maintains that Browning is the only English poet worth reading. While Maisie Ward might demur a little at this verdict, it is not at all odd that the name of the author of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" crops up so often in her book *Unfinished Business* (Sheed & Ward. $5.95.) which contains her reflections on a busy life. They are written in terms of "God's in His heaven," even though all may not yet be quite right with the world.

As usual it is a very untidy book. No sooner do you get absorbed in reading about what Modernism seemed like when it was going full force than you are asked to consider how much more primitive the art of having a baby was forty years ago. But there is a sturdy, almost breathless, doubtless implacably feminine drive in these chapters which, as you move, also puts the same kind of boots on your feet. The book comes as close to being a permanently valuable memoir about the earlier days of what is now called the Catholic "lay apostolate" as we have seen so far. Missing are the intellectual brilliance of Ida Goerres and the serenity of the Maritains; but there is much more about the market place and the home.

The Ward family—grandfather William George, father Wilfrid and mother Josephine, who wrote rather good novels—was above all one in which the spirit of Newman glowed like a flame. But it was during a number of years not a fire which gave out warmth only. English Catholics of course approved the rupture with Anglicanism but found the Cardinal's presence in their Church rather difficult and upon occasion even embarrassing. There was little if any discernible relationship between his sinuous thought, which sometimes appeared to have an affinity with Kant's, and the official texts from which Philosophy and Theology were then taught. Indeed, the *Dublin Review*, so ably edited by Wilfrid, was doubtless the first symbol in the English-speaking world of the distance which lay between Catholic intellectuals and those who referred to them in terms equivalent to our own word "eggheads."

When some in this group, notably Father Tyrell and Baron von Huegel, were caught up in the first tide of modern Biblical criticism, the rift widened. None of the British went the whole way with Père Loisy, who had started them thinking about what after all could not be ignored—namely the history and exegesis of the Bible—but there was tragedy enough when Father Tyrell left the Church after the Encyclical *Pascendi* was issued. The great Baron bowed to the verdict. Life was not, however, made easier thereby. The anti-intellectuals now had a club studded with nails which they could use with dispatch. Today, in the light of the approval given to Bible study, the controversy seems timorous and old-fashioned; but in those years anything except a literal interpretation of a Scriptural text was likely to smell of heresy, if not of something worse.

No one knows what turn the witch-hunting might have taken had it not been for the First World War, which tore to shreds the Europe which had so laboriously been established. Christians were bayonetting Christians with the grimmest possible determination, for reasons which will forever remain beyond man's power to determine. Worse than that, they were calling each other names with an unbelievable frenzy. The Church was, in so far as the *magisterium* could direct its course, no longer deeply concerned with whether somebody was seeing new relationships between the Bible and archaeology or was weighing fresh evidence about Evolution.

The problem of evil was now restated in stark forms by reason of the butchery of the war years; and there was no answer the Church could give to it except that peace was the Divine desire for mankind. This response to the bitter and broken-hearted was made with luminous charity by the great Popes of that period; and it is surely not too much to say that in doing so they began that revival of Catholic Christianity as a pertinent force in the modern world which has now reached its first peak with Vatican Council II.

THE CATHOLIC Evidence Guild, Great Britain's most memorable mission crusade, was an act of participation in this revival. To it Maisie Ward and Frank Sheed gave more than this book claims credit for. It was light-

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hearted and venturesome, almost Franciscan in its assumption that one could go the Salvation Army one better and talk about Christ and His Church on street corners and in Hyde Park. Billy Graham may since have stolen this show, but that is no reason for forgetting, among many others, Father Vincent McNabb and the "retreats" he preached at the Marble Arch. In what he did and said lived the truth of the time: that men who had lost hope could find it again through Christ.

Professorial people like me who have never had any stomach for this kind of effort, believing as they do that only depth studies count in the long run, will nevertheless read about it with a sort of nostalgic reverence. In a sense it brought Newman into places where he himself would have been most uncomfortable (one recalls how disturbed he was when ladies showed up in the audiences he addressed in Dublin), but where his spirit was none the less needed. Perhaps Maisie Ward could have sketched in somewhat greater detail the characters of those who participated in this morality play. What is said about them oddly makes them seem, *mutatis mutandis,* like a roster of Civil War generals, minus mustaches and with chopped off arms.

Theology as dispensed by the Evidence Guild was robust. The problems stressed were not those in the forefront now, but were for all that hardly less difficult to resolve. The biggest one was how to persuade people that God mattered. One principal reason was that it hadn't seemed to make much difference in the trenches or while awaiting the news that a son, a husband or a friend was dead—his head bashed in, no doubt, by a piece of shrapnel or a machine-gun bullet.

The social order also now loomed up as another form of evil. England has been rather proof against the tendency to abolish religion for the sake of social reform, the major reason being the grip of Nonconformists faiths on the working population. At first the Guild kept politics and sociology off its rostrum. But as the Great Disaster—the economic depression that started in 1929—fastened its grip on the world, those who subscribed to either Communism or Fascism greatly increased in numbers.

England had known, to be sure, its own cures for social ills including the rather romantic one which Belloc and Chesterton called Distributism. This had undoubtedly a sound core in its opposition to unbridled speculative "Capitalism," but unfortunately Belloc tended to identify the enemy with the new rich and especially with Jews. He was all in favor of the landed gentry and of the French peasant whose virtues he exaggerated (though these virtues were real enough, as Eleanor Clark has recently reminded us once more). Chesterton, whose genius will certainly some time be recognized anew, docilely followed along in the procession, though doubtless he would have been an even less productive tiller of the soil than either Newman or Wilfrid Ward. There is a good deal about Distributism in this book and much of it is interesting. It is significant that neither here nor elsewhere is there recognition of the work Father Hay, the Jesuit, did in trying to make it plain that the only way to capture Belloc's Servile State was to make it democratic through the labor movement.

Even so, Maisie Ward reduces the adventure to its disillusioning dimensions. The chronicle of Upper Crestwood Farm, which was supposed to be one of a chain of rural establishments destined to provide Britain with food and so to lower the cost of living, is delightfully ironic without being malicious. She writes: "We asked Gilbert Chesterton later on why he had never mentioned wireworms. He appeared faintly embarrassed, having almost certainly never heard of them. It was indeed a profound weakness in the Distributist movement that the intrinsic difficulties were never faced while enthusiasm was whipped up among people prone to be fired by ideas and ideals." Farming is a noble profession—perhaps the most satisfying of professions, so long as one is physically able to practice it. And of course there has been nothing specifically Catholic about it or Distributism, which was cheered in a surprising number of places. But perhaps because of the fact that personalism is, in the social order, one fine flower of the Catholic life, we of the household were more likely than others to shudder at the thought that practically everything was being bureaucratized and mechanized.

THE COMMUNIST *mystique* which was so marked a force during, and indeed after, the depression years presented a challenge of a quite different and immensely more frightening kind. Nothing in Maisie Ward's background prepared her to size this up realistically, but perhaps she has managed better than most Americans have.

We tend to think of Communism in terms of power. It is either a nasty, subterranean organization bent on

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sapping the strength and integrity of the country, or it is the Party behind the mighty state which the Russians created after the *mystique* had, as a matter fact, withered. Both it assuredly is, though something more, too. It has been, to some extent still is, the most appealing of modern heresies. Every heresy, as we know, isolates some color of the moral spectrum; and in the Communist case it has been justice.

For New Yorkers, and Maisie Ward was a frequent visitor in that city, it found its almost idyllic counterpart in the Catholic Worker movement of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, supplemented by the Friendship House of the Baroness de Hueck. The moments during which the love of God, working through these people, was pitted against the Communist's belief in class warfare as the kindling fire do not, perhaps, seem to have amounted to a great deal in any practical sense when compared with the head-on power drive to which American Catholics generally were committed as the appropriate form of assault on the Communist enemy. But how heartening it will be for the future to know that these moments were ticked off! Many people have said, and no doubt they are right, that Peter Maurin was as impractical as the Man Who Was Thursday. But he preached the Gospel in places where no one else could have. That was a great privilege and he made the most of it.

Many other ways were suggested, as time went on, for attacking the Communist fortress, some of them exemplified by Cardinal Mindzenty and Don Camillo; but the most venturesome of all was the attempt by the French worker priests to carry the Christian message to the proletariat. The chapter dealing with them and in particular with the final decision of some to side with the Communists rather than with the Christian workers (or the Church) is the most poignant.

I do not know whether the verdict arrived at is justified. The Wards have traditionally seemed to favor the view that when Rome has spoken *causa finita est*, and certainly this memoir by one of them does. But the impact of the Vatican's decision was quite different from that made in the Modernist time. Nobody seriously attacked any other form of Catholic mission to the proletariat. Indeed, Princes of the Church are now proudly identified with that mission.

There has not been enough of either of Emanuel Kant's two categories to permit discussion of many other interesting things in this book. After all, one flower in the window of the Catholic Evidence Guild did blossom into the publishing house of Sheed and Ward; and the purpose of a publishing house is to print the works of authors who are upon occasion interesting people. About her own writing Maisie Ward says that *Young Mr. Newman* is probably her best book, and this opinion seems correct. And so her memoirs come by a wide and satisfying circle round to the inspiration which the man who never went back to Oxford before the *Apologia* was written, always looking wistfully at its spires from a train window, has given to the whole of Catholic Christendom. The lay apostolate will gratefully remember this and the part which the Wards collectively have had in bringing it about.

The Convictions of an Urbane Mind

On Cyril Connolly

JAMES FINN

IT IS, apparently, Mr. Cyril Connolly's current conviction that his previous convictions are worth circulating. Not that he is insistent. Quite the contrary. When discussing his own work—achieved and at hand or potential and still glimmering in the future—there is ever present a tone of yielding modesty. To the question of why there should be a book (*Previous Convictions*. Harper & Row. $5.95) made up of selected reviews he has written over the last ten years he answers: "Because we like to get the best of our ephemeral criticism between hard covers where it may be perpetuated a little longer and even refresh those to whom it is familiar besides influencing those who do not know it already."

But lest even this seem too large a claim he continues: "If I have a gift it is that of being able to communicate my enthusiasm for literature and throw a little light on my favorite authors—and there are a great many. My last two books of collected essays are both out of print: I really don't know why one goes on." And there it is, the dying fall, the Connolly invitation to consider with him not only his favorite authors, but his reasons for

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writing about them and, intermittently, to wonder with him, "Is it worth it, after all?"

The reader soon realizes that Mr. Connolly is his own King Charles' head and keeps bobbing up not only in his travel pieces where such bobbing is inevitable but in his discussion of literary figures and movements where it is not. Now this exploitation of self is not inherently reprehensible. And where the self can manifest the limpid charm of Mr. Connolly, it is a positive asset. We can say of all writers that it is their personalities that unite the various works they have produced, but we say it of Mr. Connolly in a special sense. His other books of essays, his anthology *The Unquiet Grave*, his novel *The Rock Pool*, and what is still his most interesting book, *Enemies of Promise*—all reflect the wit, the high style, the almost unruffled urbanity, the wide range that we have come to expect of him. But there is, too, an almost audible call to reflect upon the person who produces such works.

This amiable appeal to the reader accounts, at least partially, for the anticipatory pleasure one feels at seeing his name on the cover of a journal. For one knows Mr. Connolly and knows that, almost unfailingly, his tempered judgment on the book at hand will be offered with easy elegance and unaggressive assurance. His essays are of the kind which so frequently lead Americans to say, "How do the English do it? We could do with one or two such writers in this country. The ease, the breadth, the effortlessness. . . ."

THE PRESENT collection of essays allows us to ask what all these virtues add up to. (A deplorably strenuous exercise, this adding up, that Mr. Connolly would have little taste for.) Can we really place Mr. Connolly with those critics we treasure, with those reviewers who somehow transcend the admittedly narrow limitations of the form, or with those informative conversationalists whose own enthusiasm for their subjects arouses in the reader an enthusiasm for their conversation, or, possibly, with those writers whose style becomes a preservative against the patient encroachments of time?

The essays on travel and those on animal life, while pleasant, are of passing interest and I can imagine few readers wishing to return to them for refreshment. It is the essays on authors that must bear the burden of closer examination. But how difficult it is, after reading through the volume, to select from among the many writers the author admires those about whom he was most enlightening. He has done the good reviewer's job of judging the book at hand—biography, memoir, letters, diary, criticisms, poems, novel—and given the reader a fair idea of whether he would like to read it or not. He has also communicated his own interests and enthusiasm and frequently highlighted certain not immediately apparent qualities of the writer. To do this consistently well in a couple of pages with writers as diverse as Villon, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Horace Walpole, Beckford, Diderot, Balzac, Baudelaire, Proust, Alain-Fournier—but the list grows, and we have not even touched the contemporaries—is no slight achievement. We are left, however, with an impression that we have participated in a consistently interesting conversation in which there were few moments of boredom or disinterest but in which there were only few surprises or peaks of interest. We recall the warm, pleasurable glow of the conversation, but the substance is somehow out of memory's easy reach.

Nevertheless there are some observations which stand out. Connolly is very good at establishing his own evaluation, whether it be of Horace Walpole or Samuel Rodgers, but he seldom asserts that a single work is great unless it is in the generally accepted canon of great works. When he writes then, that of Huysman's novels, "one novel only, *Là Bas*, has a real construction and it is one of the greatest novels I know," the assertion has force. So, too, do his other comments on Huysman. "He is a master of prose; no penetrator of illusions has possessed so keen a visual sense, so rich a palette. He towers over all the novelists of the end of the century. He was also a man of great integrity whose life was a spiritual pilgrimage in search of the absolute, of a rewarding satisfaction. He found it, after years of aesthetic experiment and controlled sensuality, in the Roman Catholic Church. . . ."

Connolly can also compress his distaste into brief compass tellingly. After saying that Wilde's letters are essential for "everyone who is seriously interested in the history of English literature—or European morals," he goes on to say that "on the whole they are viscous, even oppressive, they adhere rather than delight and one is left with the impression of having escaped at last the clutches of some great greedy beetle." From this vantage point he is able to offer a sympathetic, unsentimental estimate of Wilde, his talent and his work. Of Thomas Wolfe he writes: "I can say with all my heart: this man is not a novelist; he is an obsessional neurotic with a gift for words who should write only about himself and who cannot create other people." Yet he can with generous appreciation for Wolfe's qualities write that if he had lived "he would have been an enormous figure in American literature. His driving energy, his egotism, the basic strength and rightness of his values both as an artist and a man would have seared away the blindness and the rhetoric . . . he could never have dried up or become a spent ranter."

ON MOST of the great figures of modern literature he has little to say that is memorable. On Yeats and Pound and Eliot, on Fitzgerald and Hemingway he follows other critics at some distance. These writers do, after all, lend themselves to the kind of close analytical criti-

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cism that Mr. Connolly scorns. His is a mind that moves in an opposite direction, that seeks the relations between various works of a single author, between the author's life and his works, between an author and his time, between the various arts. He rises to the large generalization: "Genius is always the same thing, whether in Mozart or Shakespeare or Lawrence or Proust or Blake or Baudelaire; it is an immediate perception of the universal harmonies of life, of the shape and essence of all living things, and with that the gift of tongues, the imagery to express the perception." Aside from the questionable attribution of the gift of tongues to Mozart one wonders how much meaning he has captured in such terms.

Yet this approach is neither helpless nor useless even when faced with an author such as Joyce: "I feel that so much of *Finnegans Wake* and of *Ulysses*, even when the obscurity has been penetrated, is so fundamentally uninteresting that there must be some failure of conception or execution or both, and I think it perhaps springs from Joyce's absolute refusal to let himself mature through the spiritual struggles and intellectual discoveries of his time." This is a fundamental criticism which Mr. Connolly supports as well as a few brief pages and his own authority will allow.

Mr. Connolly never fails to gain praise for his style and I have on that account quoted generously, I trust, from his book. I would like to add a few more quotations without comment.

"Few places are more soothing than a Turkish graveyard, where the turbaned tombs are jumbled like spillikins around the boles of cypresses and the cicadas zizz above the silent koubas."

OF PAUL Léautaud, about whom he writes very well: "His vocation was greater than his talent (usually it is the other way round) and I think his failure as a writer is due to his mistrust of humanity, to puritanism of style (he abhorred all images) and to the rodent ulcer of his egocentricity. . . . One can imagine Léautaud as an English writer, someone between Gissing and Orwell, performing hatchet jobs for Dr. Leavis, droning and wasping for many years in the bitterer weeklies. . . ."

More extensive quotation would be necessary to convey the full range of a critic whose effects depend so much upon his own style. Still Mr. Connolly is not exempt from the criticism that, he suggests, a book such as this invites. When, speaking of Goethe and Voltaire, he says that "every stone on their bald summits is numbered and worn threadbare," we stumble over the idea of threadbare stones. When, in an elaborate metaphor, he says that Horace Walpole required "a poultice of rank and fashion, endlessly renewed, to alleviate an early fever of loneliness and insecurity," the carping reader will wonder how poultices applied late in life are to alleviate an early fever. When he says of Cummings that "He was one of the people in America I most wanted to get to know and it was worth it," the grammarian can be counted on to wonder less at the implied condescension than at finding "it" a rather free-floating referent.

SUCH infelicities of style—and one could extend the examples—would go almost unnoticed in the writing of a number of critics. It is Mr. Connolly's own high standards that sensitize the reader. Not for him the hard, aggressive angular writing of a Dr. Leavis intent upon "hatchet jobs." Nor the style of a Hugh Kenner whose book on Eliot he terms "clotted, over-written commentary." He is not one to pursue tiringly sources and allusions, nor to dissect and analyze at length, nor to arrange in hierarchical order according to merit the writers of a great tradition, nor to champion a favorite author as if he were a candidate for some higher office. There is too much literary muscle flexing in all that, too much of the academic sweat and midnight oil. He is content to pass on to the reader his enthusiasm for a particular book, author, event, place, and to convey some flavor of the original. There is much to be said for such cultivated, graceful impressionistic essays. And yet, and yet.

Mr. Connolly would have ended his essay there, but being trained in a more aggressive, academic American style we must push on. And yet Mr. Connolly is unsatisfactory. Despite his graceless style, Dr. Leavis is more enlightening; despite his clotted commentary, Mr. Kenner more exciting. And a good style and a serious dedication to critical writing are not naturally disjunctive. Edmund Wilson's tough and sinewy prose and Eliot's spare, astringent prose, are sufficient to dispel such notions. What is missing in Mr. Connolly that is present in these writers is their evident willingness to make hard and sharp discriminations not only in literary terms but in human, in moral terms. There are risks here, of course, and few critics have evaded them all successfully. For in order to comment incisively about the moral aspects of a literary work worth serious attention, one must be capable of mature moral judgment, and be further capable of translating these judgments into literary terms. Mr. Connolly has elected not to run these risks. He sometimes approaches such judgments only to draw back. ("But don't let's join the preachers.")

Still, what colors Mr. Connolly's prose, what gives it that tinge of melancholy is his own recognition of what he has turned away from. In the best of his essays there is a resonance that is due to recognitions he refuses to make explicit, recognitions that are the basis of any complete statement of man and his condition. Mr. Connolly has, after all, won me over to his self-estimate: his talent is greater than his vocation; he could have done greater things.

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The Contradictions of a Life of Exile

Sean O'Casey's Legacy

GORDON ROGOFF

SEAN O'CASEY would understand when I say that the news of his death last month came almost as a relief. He would understand, but he wouldn't cover me with garlands for saying so. Life was more precious to him than any knowledge he might have had that, like so many a venerable figure before him, it was no longer sitting well upon his brow. He made the shortest possible shrift out of wasteland prophets, those monarchs of gloom he saw hiding under almost every contemporary literary bush. "They are not for those in the Spring of life," he wrote recently, "not for the young who are seeing visions of great things in the future, as I do, even though I be old and grey." Yet—and with O'Casey there was usually a splendidly testy *yet* and a peculiarly confounding *but*—Samuel Beckett, for one, "wears his rue with a difference—he is a poet."

It was always like this: arguments, fights, riots in the theater ("You have disgraced yourselves again," said Yeats to the audience that was breaking up "The Plough and the Stars"), disputations with the named and the nameless, thundering rages against hypocritical politicians, ascetic clerics, savage militarists, and those stuffy theater types he once dubbed "Dramamamannakeens" and "Criticonians." But when the dust of battle settled, a responsive, gentle, lyric artist was revealed, a man in love even with those he was committed to despise.

Hanging heavily over him in later years, however, were the sad ironies born from his firm persuasions. He was in self-appointed exile from his country and his theater, an exile that had been chosen decades ago after considerable provocation from both. (Sending writers into exile has always been one of Ireland's most popular tribal customs.) But neither theater nor country cared as much about the absent lover as he cared for them underneath his growls and grumps. Oddly, it was his mentor Yeats, who as leader of the Abbey Theatre, provided the final push by arguing with him over "The Silver Tassie's" innovations. Yet his exile came at a time when he was transforming not so much his style as the theatrical context in which his rebellious dramatic comedies would be played: on the broadest level, he was done with the urban naturalism that framed "Juno and the Paycock" and "The Plough and the Stars," replacing it with choruses and fantasies, the material of dreams inherited from Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Strindberg, and Yeats himself.

It was a bad time to quit land and theater, though it is always easier to argue from the distance of time. In moving from Ireland to Britain, he was trading a place where he felt unwelcome for a place that had neither the resources nor the feeling to take him in as he deserved. To write plays is to need a theater. But England's theater, trapped then in its own stiff upper accents and its four-walled drawing room, was hardly the spiritual or actual home for a rough Irishman treating every kind of wall as a personal enemy. So O'Casey did the next best thing: he wrote plays that went largely unproduced, and to keep the endless dramas in his mind alive, he wrote a great book about himself.

MEANWHILE, the ironies continued to unfold. His young spirit scarcely touched a young audience. In England, especially, he seemed never to be talking to the people around him. His great champions were American, reviewers such as George Jean Nathan, Brooks Atkinson, and Richard Watts, names he only recently invoked to challenge Kenneth Tynan. As always, it was a proud invocation: "Is Sir Kenneth Tynan right about the play, 'Purple Dust'? Does he see clear, does he hear well, does he understand it at all? . . . I call friendly drama knights to my aid, who come cantering up, and let out a bellowing cry of 'No, Ken, No!' "

Behind the shrillness and reversed snobbery of the defense (Tynan has not been knighted *yet*, and should he ever be, it will not be a disgrace or a triumph for the ruling classes), there is the charm of the exile, the man protected from the currents and trends of daily intellectual life, unaware that, out of time, he has called clumsily upon champions who, with good will and limited sensibility, have done as much as any to make Broadway inhospitable to art. Or to put it another way, Tynan's idea of theater—even when it excludes some of O'Casey's best plays—would at least furnish a better climate for O'Casey's ideals than the accommodating notions of theater represented by Nathan, Atkinson, and Watts. The most devastating fact of O'Casey's exile from Ireland is that he so often seemed to be exiled from the world.

In time, it will be easier to know who was most at fault—O'Casey or the world. At present it looks as if they neutralized each other, wall against wall; O'Casey

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stubborn and unyielding in his opinions, the world equally resistant to his titanic will for change. It isn't surprising. He made the tactical error of following the logic of his life: from slums and the Irish Citizen Army where he tried to square the wonder he felt with the horror around him, to the discovery of books and theater where equally bloody ritual wars were waged, he withdrew finally to a Devonshire outpost where wounds could be nursed and new battle plans hatched in the relative privacy of creeping age.

CLINGING to the images of change—in science, social order, and the theater—he held fast to early innocence. Against the odds, he persisted. Great nay-sayer that he was, he tried to say yes at every turn. A visionary, he suffered continually from a childhood blight on his eyes. A devoted father, he lost a dear son only eight years ago, wishing for once, that the death had been his. Still, he said yes. The world, so it seemed, would have to be marvelous even if he had to knock it senseless first. From a quiet corner in England, he followed his beloved Whitman by sounding barbaric yawps over sleeping rooftops. From darkness, he insisted on light.

If these are contradictions, then so much the worse for us. The point of a life like O'Casey's is surely that, faced with pointlessness, it goes on. Most of us speak—as I have—from naked embarrassment with life, a little unsettled by O'Casey's presence, put out by his tattered dignity, his indifference to the rules. Like Yeats before us, we would have him as he was, the crude young poet of pubs who was supposed to father a thousand Joxers and Junos. Instead, we took to the less complicated epic liberties of Dylan and Brendan, forgetting that Sean—stretching life as far as it would take him—had written the tunes to which they danced toward early graves.

What Yeats damaged and we've missed can't be comfortably assessed. One thing is certain. The theater without the playwright lost more than the playwright without the theater. Literally from the day after the Abbey's rejection, it ceased to be a lively, imaginative, and productive home for drama. But O'Casey's later plays—however unwelcome they were to critics and friends—were bubbling with spirit, busily extending for others, if not always for himself, the frontiers of theater. It can be argued, in any case, that they were never given a chance. Published and frozen before ever reaching the stage, the most intriguing of them—"Red Roses for Me," "Purple Dust," "Time to Go," and most of all, "Cock-a-doodle-Dandy"—never found *their* director. At best, they suggest the need for a company of exiled Irishmen, mercurial actors aware that conventions change, that character is more than behavior just as acting is more than a brogue. What may well be missing is some gloriously dotty Irish Berlin Ensemble led by an equally improbable Bertolt Littlewood. Before agreeing with Yeats, we should have given the plays a hope.

Certainly there is a terrible lesson in O'Casey's history for theaters everywhere. Whatever the tempers of the moment, whatever may be said for the rising stars of actors and directors in this century, the dramatist—particularly when he and the theater have shared an interweaving success—must be given his head. The mistakes he may make are as nothing compared to the irreparable error of holding him back or rejecting him outright. The saddest, silliest, most wasteful part of the O'Casey story is, that for all his pride and eloquent bluster, he was not as strong as he wanted himself and us to believe. The hurt cut deeply, not only to his heart, but to his vaulting but vulnerable theatrical talent. Despite his gallant stand in the wings, he wanted and deserved a welcome on stage.

The final irony is the theatrical presence—the star quality—of his autobiography: scenes connected by passion, comedies of terror, death agonies, love play, farceurs who kill, melodramatists who laugh, a stunning rhetoric that aches to be heard, crowned finally by moments like the ending where hushed reverberations are meant to fill the silent theater's air: "Even here, even now, when the sun had set and the evening star was chastely touching the bosom of the night, there were things to say, things to do. A drink first! What would he drink to—the past, the present, the future? To all of them! He would drink to the life that embraced the three of them! Here, with whitened hair, desires failing, strength ebbing out of him, with the sun gone down, and with only the serenity and the calm warning of the evening star left to him, he drank to Life, to all it had been, to what it was, to what it would be. Hurrah!"

For such a man, grief lacks eloquence and mourning is an indulgence. To honor him, we must live a little higher, we must dare again. I am relieved because the test comes now. If he is set aside in death as he was cast aside in life, we shall have disgraced ourselves again.

Madrid

Outside
(No, over there: through the window and across the street)
a grey lady with grey hair and a black dress
is standing on a black iron balcony
framed by black shutters
of a grey chipping house
as night falls.
And I don't know what she's thinking about.

And she doesn't know I'm here.

DOUGLAS L. FROST

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Report from the Council

The Blossoming of Vatican II

GREGORY BAUM

THE DECISIVE events of the Second Vatican Council took place in September of this year, in the three weeks after the opening of the session. It will not be possible to report the many significant details in a single article. I shall try to draw the essential lines.

Chapter 3 of the schema *De Ecclesia,* on the collegiality of bishops in the Church, was approved by the Council. It teaches the doctrine that the episcopal college, including the pope as its head, holds the supreme ministerial power to teach and to govern in the Church. This means that the bishops are co-responsible for the teaching and policy-making of the whole Church; and even though the pope, thanks to his primacy, remains canonically independent from them, he enters into a dialogue relation with them. The chapter does not specify the precise forms in which this collegiality will find expression, but there can be little doubt that the manner and the tone assumed by the supreme ecclesiastical authority will undergo a considerable transformation.

One must add that chapter 3 is written quite modestly. It emphasizes not once but a dozen times that episcopal collegiality does not in any way weaken the primacy of teaching and jurisdiction belonging to the pope, according to the definition of Vatican I. A superficial reading of the chapter may give the impression that the pope's primatial ministry is given more stress than ever before. But this is not so: the doctrine of collegiality is clearly defined. The pope appears above all as the head of the episcopal college, inseparably united to his bishops even when he acts alone, freely, without their canonical approval.

The opposition to chapter 3 was strong among a small circle of bishops. This at least was the impression created by the leaflets against collegiality that were handed out. The Theological Commission, which had accepted the text of chapter 3 unanimously, granted the opposing bishops permission to express their viewpoint in a conciliar report prior to the presentation of the document. This was done by Bishop Franic. His speech will remain a useful document for measuring the true dimensions of the conflict that has gone on at the Council for the last two years.

Chapter 3 was divided into 39 articles (the Anglican observers enjoyed this!) which were submitted to the vote of the Council separately, a procedure stretching the voting over many days. Day after day the bishops manifested their mind. The chapter was approved by an overwhelming majority. Out of approximately 2200 prelates, the opposition could not rally more than about 300 votes. On the 30th of September the entire chapter 3 was submitted to a vote, this time to the threefold vote of *placet, non placet,* or *placet iuxtamodum* (approval, disapproval, conditional approval). The opposition still tried to persuade the bishops to give only conditional approval to the chapter. If more than one third of the Council Fathers voted *placet iuxtamodum,* the chapter would have remained in some way indefinite. The Theological Commission would have been obliged to study the *modi,* i.e. the reservations of the bishops, modify the text somewhat and submit it again to the vote of the Council. This did not happen. The chapter was fully approved by the Council. The question of collegiality is settled.

There is reason to give thanks to God. The recovery of collegiality has the quality of a miracle. It was really only after the convocation of the Council by Pope John that Catholic theologians began to write about the collegiality of bishops, basing their work upon the ancient tradition of the Church and finding support from the great authors of all ages. The idea seemed new to many Catholics. I just spoke to the bishop who mentioned the notion of collegiality for the first time in the Central Preparatory Commission, the preconciliar body preparing the agenda of the Council. He recalls with a smile the lack of receptivity to this idea among the men who then were powerful.

Yet despite the opposition, the understanding of collegiality grew among the bishops. They became conscious of themselves as a unity, as a team, and were willing to insist on this against the conviction of those men who at one time, in the Holy Office and other Roman Congregations, were regarded as the best interpreters of the mind of the Church. One marvels at the speed with which this doctrinal development took place at the Council. There is no doubt in my mind that the conciliar approval of collegiality with such an overwhelming majority is partly due to the opening speech of Pope Paul, in which he defended chapter 3 before his brothers in the episcopate.

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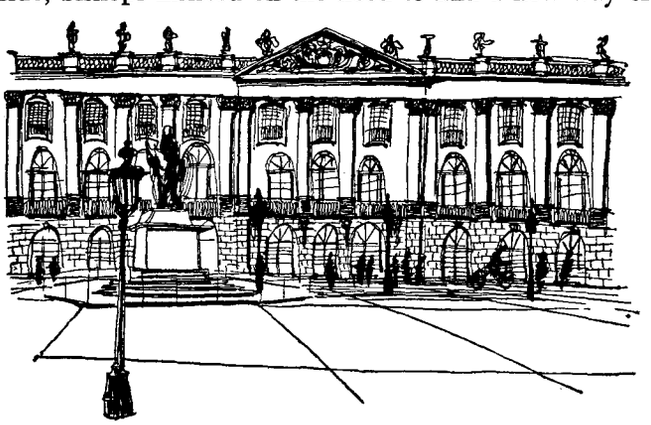
Chapter 3 also broke with a very ancient tradition of the Western Church. The permanent diaconate was restored in the Catholic Church! Episcopal conferences which decide to do so may train and ordain deacons to serve in the apostolate. This ordination may be given to married men. Following the tradition of the ancient Church, the Council decided that after ordination to the diaconate, marriage is no longer possible.

While the voting on the first chapters of the schema *De Ecclesia* was taking place, the discussion of important subjects went on in the Council hall. The conciliar discussion began with chapters 7 and 8 of *De Ecclesia,* dealing with the communion of saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here again, as in most subjects that come up at the Council, the opinion of bishops was divided. The episcopal speeches easily fell into two sets. Some treated their subject in the neo-scholastic terms of the old theological manuals, coupled with the individualism proper to that period of Catholic theology. Speaking on eschatology, or the last things which will come upon God's people, they would insist on what happens to the individual: heaven, hell, purgatory. The other set of speeches would present the concerns of contemporary Catholic theology in biblical terminology. In dealing with eschatology they would insist on the destiny in Christ of the whole people and, in fact, of all of humanity. They spelled out what the hope of future fulfillment and the fear of universal judgment mean in the *present* life of the Christian people. The two theological approaches and their respective areas of concern are beginning to be so wide apart that dialogue becomes exceedingly difficult. The encouraging thing is that the votes always show which way the Church is moving.

In the discussion on the Blessed Virgin Mary the two sides spoke up again. Though the Marian teaching is now part of the schema on the nature of the Church, some bishops insisted that the privileges of Our Lady should be more emphasized. They wished to stress the superiority of Mary over the Church. Some asked for new titles of Our Lady which would express this superiority. The Polish hierarchy asked the Council to dedicate the whole of humanity to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the other side, bishops insisted on the need to find a new way of speaking about Mary, more sober, more in harmony with the Scriptures, more conscious that she belongs to the mystery of Christ in the Church. They criticized the present text for attributing meanings to certain scriptural and patristic texts which were by no means certain.



THE PRESENT chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary is still, basically, the original document proposed to the Fathers in the first session. The attempt to begin all over again and present our Lady as sign and type of the Church did not succeed. Instead the original document was reworked, references to the universal mediation and the co-redemption of Mary were carefully deleted, and some new paragraphs on our Lady as type of the Church were added.

To understand an aspect of the conciliar discussion which has been highlighted in the press, one must know that in speaking of Mary's cooperation with Christ in faith, hope and charity the text uses a number of titles such as *socia* and *adiutrix* and mentions that there is a custom of calling Mary *mediatrix.* Though the text explains that this does not add or take away anything from the unique mediation of Jesus Christ and indicates through the context that this title means nothing more than *socia* and *adiutrix,* several Fathers spoke specifically against the title of *mediatrix.* They believed that it confuses the faithful. The term may be understood correctly by a theologian, they said, who is conscious that Christ's mediation and the intercessory mediation of the saints do not belong to the same order; but the faithful may be led to believe that Mary is our mediator to Jesus in the sense that she is closer to us than the Lord; and this would be a dangerous error. The concern of these bishops is to foster love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary which is in harmony with the understanding of Christ as the way to the Father and the self-understanding of the Church as authoritatively expressed in her own liturgy.

The conciliar discussion then continued on certain chapters of the old schema on the government of dioceses, which is now called *De Pastorale Episcoporum Munere in Ecclesia* (On the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church). A glance at it shows that the traditional division of the ministerial power of the bishop into *potestas ordinis* and *potestas iurisdictionis,* taught in all the textbooks, no longer sums up the authority given him in the Church: co-responsibility of the bishop for the whole Church is an essential part of his office, even though it is not an exercise of jurisdiction.

THEN CAME THE discussion on the two declarations on Religious Liberty and on the Jews and Other Non-Christians. These had been proposed to the Council in the second session as chapters 5 and 4 of the schema *De Oecumenismo.* There had been a brief discussion and then the Fathers had been invited to send their remarks to the Secretariat for Christian Unity. This Secretariat

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now proposed the amended declarations to the Council. Everyone was conscious that their subject matter was of greatest importance for the life of the Church and that people in all parts of the world were more interested in these two statements than in purely Catholic issues such as collegiality.

The declaration on religious liberty asserts that freedom in matters of religion is the right of every person. This implies freedom of conscience and freedom in the exercise of religion. In many parts of the Church this doctrine is taken for granted. It is part of our modern cultural heritage. The constitutions of our countries guarantee this freedom. And yet this understanding of religious liberty is opposed to the traditional Christian approach. At one time, all the Christian Churches believed that the prince or the government had the duty to protect the true religion and regard as illegal all false religions. This was the view not only of the middle ages but also of the baroque age of absolutism. In the Catholic Church these views have survived to this day; they were in fact taught for a long time by the Holy See. The present declaration challenges the view of the age of absolutism; it teaches what most of us take for granted: that the dignity of the human person demands freedom from coercion in religious matters.

The reception of the declaration was mixed. Many voices from Spain and some other countries, without saying openly *non placet*, disapproved of the doctrine in principle. It was deeply humiliating to listen to speech after speech advocating a superannuated absolutist theology which regarded God and the mystery of human salvation as caught up in concepts to be manipulated by Church and State, a theology, alas, which at one time was used to defend the Inquisition. Listening to these speeches we began to understand the fear which men outside the Church sometimes have of us.

Fortunately, the defense of the Declaration was very strong. The American bishops acted in unison. Their cardinals and several bishops spoke in the name of the whole hierarchy. Cardinal Cushing roared into the microphone so that his voice could be heard, as he had promised, on the other side of the Tiber. He gave an excellent speech. The same must be said of many other cardinals and bishops from the U.S., Canada, South America, Africa and various European countries. Through theological and pragmatic arguments the old position was completely demolished.

WILL THE Declaration, refined and improved according to the positive suggestions of the Fathers, be accepted by the Council? I am convinced of it. A highly significant speech was made by Bishop Carlo Colombo, who is known to be Pope Paul's theologian (he was consecrated a bishop only recently). He asserted that the Declaration on Religious Liberty was important also for the Church in Italy and then proceeded to defend the document against the objections raised by the older curial cardinals and bishops. This was a sign to the Fathers where the Pope stood in this debate.

Among the bishops and theologians who are teaching the doctrine of religious liberty there is no perfect agreement on how to defend and justify it. There are two tendencies. There are those who wish to address themselves to a universal audience and therefore avoid Scriptural and hence strictly theological considerations; they base their position on the common conscience of the modern world, our common understanding of the person, especially as expressed in the existing constitutions of states, in the legislation of various societies, etc. Others believe that one should present a specifically Christian basis for religious liberty. They wish to understand man and his vocation according to the Scriptures and show that the human person created in the image of God can be faithful to his redemptive vocation only if he remains free from external coercion in the area of religion.

To avoid the possibility that the conciliar Declaration might lay down a particular approach to the justification of religious liberty, Cardinal Ritter suggested that the Declaration simply announce and describe this liberty without attempting to produce detailed arguments for it. This suggestion, against the Cardinal's intention, was immediately taken up by the opponents of religious liberty. They proposed that the Council simply make a declaration on liberty in the modern world: which would leave open the question whether or not the ideal eventually to be restored is a Catholic government protecting the Catholic religion. This distortion of Cardinal Ritter's suggestion was rejected by several speakers. The basic structure of the present Declaration will remain unchanged.

I leave for my next article the description of the enthusiastic welcome which the Council Fathers, not least the American bishops, gave to the issue of Jewish-Christian relations.

Portrait of the Artist

The day we drove over the crowded bridge
that spans the Liffey, someone said,
"They make Guinness of this," an edge
on the smile. No one laughed. Dead

Joyce was alive and this was his
river. The whispering city repeated over
and over the words and phrases
he took from it once. Wherever

we went in Dublin, he had been there
before us. Odd, how the years' long rain
pounds on the streets but never clears
his shabby boot prints from the stone.

SISTER MAURA, S.S.N.D.

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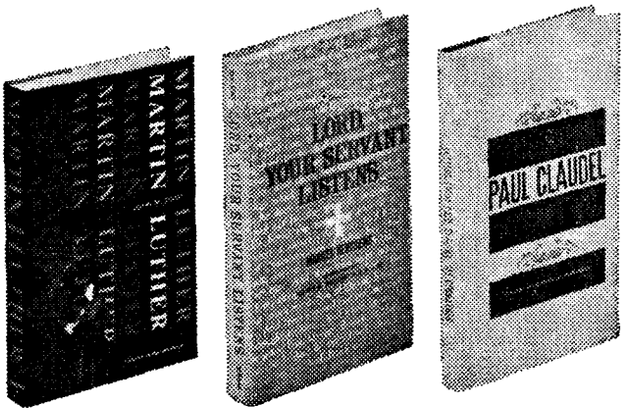

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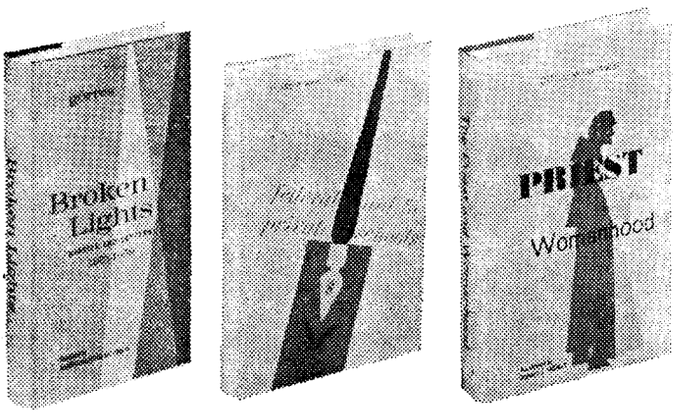

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THE STAGE

A Strangelovely War

THE PROGRAM for Joan Littlewood's "Oh What a Lovely War" contains some interesting extras: among them, two brief statements by the authors on why they hate war, and some grim statistics about the nuclear situation. This presumably ensures that anyone who fails to get the play's message in the theater will find it when he gets home (or whenever people read theater programs); it also suggests that the play is meant to have universal significance, on the principle that once you've seen one war you've seen them all.

As it happens, you couldn't ask for a clearer guide to the play's weaknesses, which are respectively overemphasis and elephantiasis-of-the-message. The First World War was a gallantly foolish affair: there isn't very much you can add to it in the way of irony, although the play tries. The British set out to fight it with Boer war songs, a Crimean military establishment and the consolations of Victorian religion. The mess that ensued doesn't need italics. The best moments in the play are in fact the quietest ones.

As to those attempts to make the message sound universal: It may be true that all wars are equally foolish (although this can hardly be assumed in a program note); but anyone transcribing a play full of wartime rhetoric should have no trouble in remembering that the bigger the scope the emptier the statement (see Douglas Haig's statements about God). The play is, again, easily at its best when dealing with particularities—the songs, the specific atmospheres—at its worst when trying to stuff it all into the Human Comedy.

Unfortunately, the particularities also induce the most violent nostalgia. The moment Miss Littlewood's lecture lets up, her skill at historic evocation starts tugging us in the other direction. I can imagine a survivor of those times leaving the theater with all the wrong tears in his eyes. With so much period charm on display, it is awfully hard for anyone to stay mad at the First World War for long.

A further difficulty is raised by the English class thing. The 1914 English officer-class were victims of perhaps the most artificial education ever devised, and the gap between them and their men must have been unique even in military history. They went to their deaths believing that their rather stilted idealism was shared right down the line. In the play, the officer-class is wrapped up in Douglas Haig, a rattle-headed butcher: but the irony was that most of them weren't butchers at all, in anything but effect. They were, one gathers, Christian gentlemen of a practical and human stupidity almost impossible in any other time and place. Their thought-processes were so classically abstract that they could take part in the most horrible slaughter without losing an ounce of purity. This was a special horror of the first war, and it cannot be flattened into a universal principle. The case against nuclear weapons is, peace to Dr. Strangelove, rather different.

It is only the weaker side of the play that wants to argue, though. At its better moments—and this includes most of the second act and even some of the program—it can be reviewed more or less straight. Victor Spinetti who forms the compositional center is one of those actors of boundless talent who isn't quite as good as he should be: the thing behind the talent isn't very interesting as yet. In the first scene he twits the audience in the manner of a music hall m.c., but he lacks the lunatic aggressiveness for this, and the effect is simply fatuous. Later he makes amends as a double-talking drill-sergeant and a mysteriously enraged French general, and makes small deficits as an American profiteer with a wobbly accent. Barbara Windsor is funny as an all-purpose female, and George Sewell makes a grisly Haig, doing a sort of minuet as he throws more men onto the fire.

The authors probably deserve some credit, though it is hard to say what they actually did, since the whole thing is made up of quotations. The production, as noted, is fine, inciting the wayward thought that they don't make wars like that anymore. As pastiche, "Oh What a Lovely War" is much better than it probably sounds here; but for peace-propaganda a few photos of Hiroshima will produce better results any day. *(At the Broadhurst)*

WILFRID SHEED

THE SCREEN

What Is Truth?

AMONG the most provocative of the many shorts shown along with the feature films at last month's New York Film Festival was "The Last Clean Shirt," a 40-minute American "Pop Art" movie made by Alfred Leslie. This "Pop Art" venture wasn't very pop with the audience, but I was attracted by what it was trying to do. The first of its three parts has a young Negro get into an open car with a young white woman, set an alarm clock at 12:00, and then start driving around the city. The camera is in back of the car so you can see the couple and the ordinary city sights. She talks continuously in a made-up language—similar to the Bergmanese in "The Silence." At 12:07, they're still riding and she's still talking. (By this time, the audience was booing.) The car drives on, passes a church where a loud speaker is blaring something about "Ashes to ashes." Around 12:10, the car is back at its starting place; and while the couple is getting out, a man's voice on the

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sound track sings "They put the last clean shirt on my poor brother Bill." Fin.

Part two repeats the whole thing exactly as we saw and heard it the first time—except it is accompanied by subtitles indicating what the woman is saying. Her continuous patter reads like e.e. cummings under the influence of Gracie Allen. Once again the car and its passengers return to the starting point and "the last clean shirt on my poor brother Bill." Fin—again (with so much applause on the sound track that it almost drowned out the booing of the real audience). Part three shows exactly the same visuals, from 12 o'clock on, but with new subtitles, this time revealing what the man is *thinking* while the woman chatters on. And his stream of consciousness winds up with an expression of hatred for that "last clean shirt" song. Fin. Really Fin, this time.

In spite of the booing audience (an audience, by the way, that applauded vigorously at the same performance for "The Brig," a 68-minute filmed version of the stage play about Marine brutality and sadism) I was fascinated by "The Last Clean Shirt" and I applaud Alfred Leslie's intentions in telling the same story three times. Perhaps the film doesn't quite come off and requires too much patience on the part of the audience. But I still admire the scheme; and I've always wondered ever since I read *Mr. Fothergill's Plot* why the movies didn't attempt a similar work. In that English book, written about 30 years ago, some ten leading writers were given the same bare outline of a plot and told to expand it into a short story of their own. Watching what each writer did in his own way with the same outline was intriguing.

THE CLOSEST that the movies have ever come to this appears in one of my favorite films of all time. When Akira Kurosawa's "Rashomon" appeared in the United States in 1951, it not only aroused American audiences to an interest in Japanese pictures, but also presented them with a film of extraordinary beauty and depth. In telling four times a dramatic story of rape and murder, each time from the biased point of view of one of the leading characters, "Rashomon" is asking what truth really is. Although it suggests somewhat cynically that we are what we are, and perhaps truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, the film manages to end on a note of hope for mankind.

Perhaps it was inevitable that a great film like "Rashomon" should be re-made into an American movie as it has now in "The Outrage." Fay and Michael Kanin based their play of several years ago on the original movie and the stories by Ryunoshuka Akutagawa. It was, however, set like "Rashomon" in eighth-century Japan, while Michael Kanin has moved his screenplay for the new movie to post-Civil War of the American west. It tells virtually the same story—even to the framework scenes that make the film's beginning and ending between which are the violent flashbacks. Like "Rashomon," "The Outrage" uses flashbacks within flashbacks and expects the viewer to keep on his toes to follow the complicated plot. It is definitely worth the effort.

A. Ronald Lubin has given "The Outrage" a first-rate production that includes Kanin's good script, James Wong Howe's stunning black-and-white photography of the sets and craggy country around Chatsworth, California, and an outstanding cast under the direction of Martin Ritt. Once again, as in "Hud," Ritt tells a wild, disturbing tale set in a wild, rough locale.

The three men discussing the tale (and providing the framework to which the camera returns from time to time) are waiting for the train at the railroad station at Silver Gulch. They are played by William Shatner as the disillusioned Preacher who feels he has failed and is leaving his flock, Howard da Silva as the wiley Prospector, and Edward G. Robinson as the foul-mouthed, mean Con Man. While they wait in the rain, they talk over the recent baffling trial of the Bandit for rape and murder. And this leads to the flashbacks in which the three involved in the horrible crime, and later the Prospector who witnessed it, tell what happened.

What happened and only what we are sure of (the bare outline) is: a Husband and Wife were riding through a woods; they were accosted by the Bandit who raped the woman; the Husband was killed; the Wife fled. Paul Newman, looking exactly right as the greasy, sneaky Bandit tells his version at the trial, as does Claire Bloom as the lovely, seductive, vindictive Wife. Laurence Harvey, assuming his usual dead-pan as the Husband who is now dead, tells his story through an elderly Indian (Paul Fix) who goes into a trance for his recitation. These three versions do not agree on who did what to whom. And the fourth version told by the Prospector in an almost humorous vein disagrees still further, except for the established bare outline. But it is obvious in each case that each recitation is told from the teller's point of view and to justify himself. We are never sure which tale is correct.

Although "The Outrage" is a very well-made picture (except for the wide variety of accents displayed by this motley cast portraying westerners, southerners, midwesterners, Mexicans and Indians) I found myself preferring "Rashomon" with all the mystery and beauty of its eighth-century costumes and sets. But then I realized that American audiences who did not understand the Japanese language relied on English subtitles which did not translate everything. Perhaps if "The Outrage" had not been so talky, I would have liked it more; and perhaps if I were watching this story for the first time, instead of the third or fourth, it would have held me spellbound as "Rashomon" did. In any case, "The Outrage" is an absorbing, adult film, the kind that Hollywood makes too seldom. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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Herzog in Front of a Mirror, the Reader Behind Him

Herzog. By Saul Bellow. Viking. $5.75.

by Thomas Curley

THE OLD SAYING that Paul's idea of Peter tells one more about Paul than Peter has point here. Moses Elkanah Herzog is not an easy man to know despite the fact that he spends 341 pages trying to figure himself out. Long before that, however, I was willing to agree that, whether or not he succeeds, Saul Bellow, his co-creator you might say, had written a comic novel of vigorous and subtle surface, with dazzling illusions of depth.

Herzog presents himself as he is in the summer of 1964 when what action there is takes place. The past is still alive in the forty-seven year old Herzog and if you want a chronology, you'll have to take notes. The notes must be taken: Born in Montreal. Moved to Chicago as a boy and grew up there. Served in the Second War for a while but was given a medical discharge. Has a Ph.D. and has written an *engagé* book on Romanticism and Christianity. Is the ex-husband of two women, one of whom, the second, hates him, or so he says. The father of two children, (one by each wife) both of whom he loves dearly. A world-traveller. A professed heterosexual. A Jew.

The facts pile up and their relevance is clear, but not their relative relevance. His Jewishness, for example, is very important, but so pervasive and natural that you hardly notice it until you make your list. Nevertheless, he says of his childhood home on Napoleon Street: "Here was a wider range of human feelings than he had ever again been able to find." And his memories of that street support this statement. The memories are valid but the feelings have lost their "taken-for-grantedness" and therefore they have changed.

No, the facts won't do, for we only know them through and in Herzog and he is forever re-arranging them. He has to. He suspects that he is, or is about to be, insane and he must talk, must explain, must justify. He is a most unhappy man, but lest we begin to pity him he reminds us from an eighteenth century source: "Grief, Sir, is a species of idleness," thereby serving notice that we should not understand or pity too quickly. There is little fear of that. Moses wants to be loved (and several women are willing to oblige him) but he is not sure he wants to be known, which makes matters difficult. Towards the end of the book when he remarks that ". . . if the unexplained life [is it "unexplained" or "unexamined"?] is not worth living, the explained life is unbearable, too," the impatient reader might well exclaim, "You said it!"

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Once you accept this talent of Herzog's, however—the talent to irritate and yet maintain your fascination—you begin to appreciate Bellow's achievement. Herzog is not just a brilliant, eccentric professor who has conned us into his classroom for several hours of opinions and personal asides. He is a man who has been deeply hurt by his second divorce; a man who cannot work any longer. In his pain he uses ideas, any idea he can catch hold of, to stay afloat.

Every bartender knows the pleasures of hearing the drunk on his ex-wife—that's why bartenders take to drink. But Herzog on Madeleine—the pain is genuine but you can't help laughing. Hasn't he been good to her? Rescued her from a conversion to Catholicism; introduced her, initiated her, really, into the cultural life. And what does she do? Throws him over for his best friend (ex-best-friend), an intellectual pretender and a cripple to boot! You feel for Herzog, and then, very innocently, Herzog (Bellow) writes: "For a few weeks in Ludeyville [a town in Western Massachusetts where they lived for a while] he required Madeleine to make love on the bathroom floor. She complied, but he could see when she lay down on the old tiles that she was in a rage." Weeks? Required? Complied? And when he complains to his would-be third wife of his former wife and friends, "They all lectured, everyone lectured. People legislate continually by means of talk," you are reminded of the son who, after killing his mother and father, pleads for leniency on the grounds that he is an orphan.

If Bellow had done only that, it would be enough: a learned, sensitive man of good will in genuine pain who, in the midst of his pain, reveals his own ridiculousness and brutality and makes us laugh. But he goes farther. He makes Herzog attempt a meaningful act, brings him off the stage into the street.

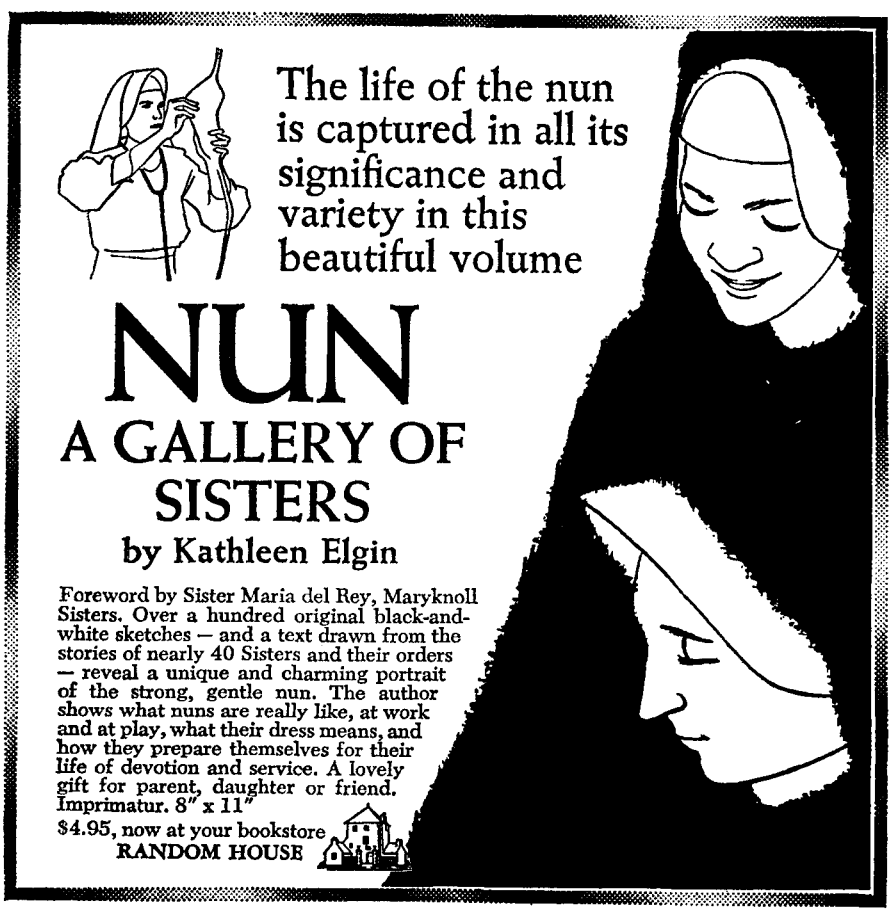
Herzog goes to downtown New York to see a lawyer. While waiting for him, he stops into several courtrooms. In one, the case of a woman who has killed her child is being heard. "The child screamed, clung, but with both arms the girl hurled it against the wall. On her legs was ruddy hair. And her lover, too, with long jaws and zooty sideburns, watching on the bed. Lying down to copulate, and standing up to kill."

Here are facts, here are realities that Herzog cannot assimilate and explain. His "*human feelings*" (Bellow's emphasis) are of no use. Immediately after this (Bellow does not say "therefore" but this juxtaposition is suggestive) Herzog flies out to Chicago with the intention (which we are never tempted to take seriously) of killing his second wife and her lover. Violence is contagious. He finds his father's old pistol, with two bullets in it, of course, but he never takes it from his pocket and he ends up in the hands of the police himself.

"All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse."

Few today agree with Aristotle, but it is curious the need we feel to have something happen. All through the book Herzog had talked, talked, and talked about it. Then he witnessed, by hearsay, the most unspeakable crime of violence. And he must act, however ridiculously. Without action, without a movement involving both his soul and body, Herzog would have remained a puppet, an intellectual, soul-searching puppet, but a puppet all the same. It is important that he should be hurt, as he is, in his body. And so when we read at the end that Moses Herzog has at last no messages for anyone, "nothing, not a single word," we accept the silence as a consequence of something more than being out of breath.

I said at the beginning that *Herzog* was a work of vigorous and subtle surface, with dazzling illusions of depth. It is as if Herzog stood in front of a mirror and the reader stood behind him. Behind the reader and Herzog at various distances are many mirrors. Throughout the book Herzog stands still and the mirrors move; the reflections multiply and blend, dissolve and reform. Except once, but once is enough for an intellectual.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When you finish this novel, turn again to the first page and a half where Bellow briefly summarizes the whole book. Madeleine and her lover had spread the rumor that he was insane. He wonders whether it's true.

He ". . . saw the shadow of his face in a gray, webby window. He looked weirdly tranquil. A radiant line went from mid-forehead over his straight nose and full, silent lips." It is an image to remember. Moses was not eloquent, so God appointed his brother Aaron to speak for him.

Four Novels on Race Relations

The Siege of Harlem. By Warren Miller. McGraw-Hill. $3.95.
Skin Deep. By Ralph G. Martin. McKay. $3.95.
Love. By Justin Mamis. Stein and Day. $4.95.
The People One Knows. By Robert Boles. Houghton-Mifflin. $3.95.

by William James Smith

THE MARKET is flooded currently with novels about race relations. I can understand easily enough why the conscientious or even the curious might feel that some of the non-fiction works were essential reading. But fiction? I should think the whole area would be far too sensitive, both for the noble and the benighted, to indulge in gratuitous exposure to less than the classics in the field. And what are the classics in the field? Perhaps they have not been written yet. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may have started a war but it didn't establish any literary records, and none of the above books is likely to do either the one or the other.

Of course no novel is purely and simply about racial problems. There are added attractions—humor, sex, verbal felicity, maybe just simple information. Warren Miller is the only one in this group to offer something extra in the way of humor. Martin offers a slavering of sex, and Mamis and Boles the fillip of what might be called personal insight rather than information in any textbook sense.

The Siege of Harlem deals with the world of the not-so-distant future when Harlem has set itself up as an independent state, barricaded off in austerity but contentment from the world of the Privileged People. The story is told to a group of youngsters named Jomo, Sekou, Mboya, Shabad, etc., by an old Uncle Remus type, who recounts the tragedy of Lance Huggins, Harlem's first Prime Minister, Miss Brindle of Teaneck, N.J., his beloved, and Art Rustram, Lance's Foreign Minister and third man in the unhappy triangle. And if this is beginning to sound witless you should read the book. At times Harlem becomes, in effect, Castro's Cuba, further adding to the confusion.

Mr. Miller earned a reputation as an interpreter of the Negro and his distinctive speech patterns in *The Cool World*, a novel published to considerable acclaim. Why he chose to put this story in the mouth of Uncle Remus is a point I do not fathom. Uncle Tom would have

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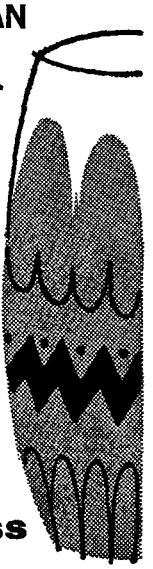

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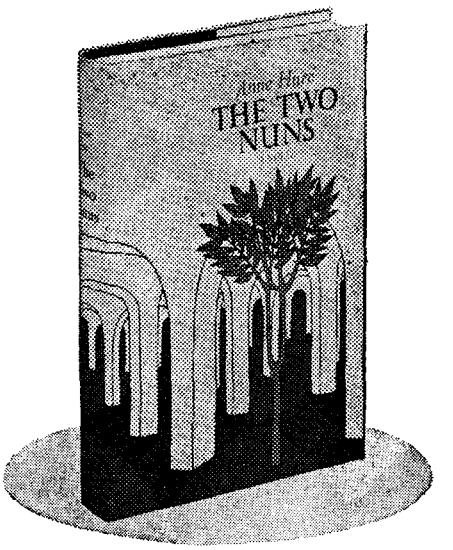

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seemed as plausible a choice. I take it largely on the authority of the bookjacket that the narrator's voice is indeed reminiscent of old Remus. What the book brings more to my mind is something rather different. As a child I was on occasion exposed to the radio program Amos 'n' Andy and I made some attempt to simulate the dreary gaiety it brought forth in my elders. But even then I was somewhat baffled by the supposed humor. Reading *The Siege of Harlem* took me right back to the days of the Kingfish and Madame Queen.

I don't suppose Negroes especially resented the travesty presented by Amos 'n' Andy back in those days before racism had become a national obsession, and I doubt that any of its humor was viciously motivated. And, of course, Mr. Miller's sympathies are all with his Negro characters. His only villains are the Privileged People, and he even expresses a little sympathy for their ignorance. It is just that the whole concept of the book seems bizarre. Lance and Art and Miss Brindle are about as real as Amos and the Kingfish and Madame Queen, even to the same comically pretentious talk.

The whole point is, Why? Why do it at all? It's not an amusing book and it's not a serious book. It doesn't even fall anywhere in between. The cutting edge of any irony is lost in the manner of presentation and a possibly instructive allegory is lost in an absurd "plot." It is an ill-conceived book at best.

Ralph G. Martin, another white man interpreting the Negro psyche, has written in *Skin Deep* the story of four Negro expatriates in Paris: a painter, a psychologist, a musician and a writer. Each of them is big, handsome, intelligent, talented, filled with rich dark laughter, and irresistibly attractive to blonde American girls. They are all agonizingly sensitive to boot. In Paris they find acceptance as human beings regardless of their color, but this is not enough to bring them happiness.

The life history of each of them is recounted in convincing detail. Johnny cannot settle for a white woman. Lester marries one but worries about the coming baby. Steve hates all whites in his subterranean soul. And Herman realizes he must go home and help out in Harlem. They get drunk together and laugh richly and darkly. The End.

The conversation in the book runs like this:

"Emilie, do you remember the first time we heard Johnny sing at that little *intimé* club on the left bank?"

"It was a firetrap. If the French had tough fire prevention laws, almost all those clubs would go out of business."

"It was *intimé*. And the way everybody applauded by snapping their fingers instead of clapping. So chic and different."

That sample is not entirely unfair, but the chief shortcoming of the book is not the cliché conversation, but the lack of much real distinctiveness of personality in each of the four main characters, and even more the fact that they are *nothing but* Negroes. Surely Negroes must have some problems besides their color. Mr. Martin says that they do even though their color is far more than skin deep; but his novel suggests, all the same, that his characters would cease to exist if they were not black, that they would fade into a white nothingness of perfect adjustment. Life is more complicated than color, whatever its depth. In the case of *Skin Deep,* however, it is probably not a point worth belaboring. The novel could not have risen much above its stilted dialogue.

Mr. Mamis, in *Love,* deals with the problem of the Jew "integrating" into the life of the small town. Isaac Schuman runs his drygoods store with pride. He is weary but idealistic. Becky, his wife, is fat, keeps a clean house, and is fiercely possessive of her sons, who show dangerous signs of marrying non-Jewish girls. One boy is dutiful and works in the store, the other has a touch of wildness in him. John, the wild one, comes home from some roustabouting in Texas to visit his ailing father. Old Isaac wants to be understood and accepted by his neighbors, and writes letters explaining Yom Kippur to the town newspaper.

The crisis of the novel arises over the possibility that young John, his father's favorite, will be drafted into

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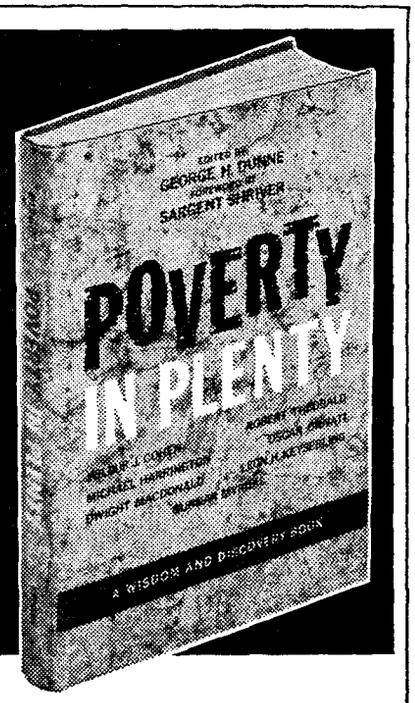
the Korean War. Isaac, on the Draft Board, is in an agonizing position. Then John, to show his father that he too is idealistic, declares himself a conscientious objector and the fat is in the fire.

The solution of this plot complication is an odd one, making out John as a fairly inexplicable nincompoop. But odd John aside, the book is a touching family portrait. The harsh tensions of family love are drawn with care and sensitivity and the individuals come across as such even in terms of their familiarity as types. I do hope, however, that Mr. Mamis has not, as the book jacket suggests, moved from Bennington, Vermont to New York City to "move into the front rank of new novelists." He could do that as well in Bennington, but not on the basis of this book. A second one might do it, but even at that, those front ranks are rather thin.

Robert Boles, in *The People One Knows*, is, for a happy change, a Negro commenting upon Negroes, and the commentary rings a little truer than Mr. Martin's or Mr. Miller's. For all that the book is not entirely successful. Mr. Boles, who is twenty-one, has written the story of an American Negro in the Army in France. Having attempted suicide, Saul Beckworth is in the hospital awaiting discharge and possible return to America.

The brief and physically uneventful story covers only a few days while he is contemplating his past and his future. He visits with French friends but finds no real answer there and decides, with resignation but a quiet sense of hope, to go home to America. He has reached no easy solutions and does not expect to do so. "There is always mystery between man and man," he says, "between man and the world and between man and a woman. One loves what one cannot understand. There is always a point of mystery from which love radiates."

A common failing of first novels is that they project their minor characters vividly enough while their autobiographical hero remains dim and ambiguous. Mr. Boles' major failing in his first novel is quite the contrary. His hero comes across convincingly enough in the terms of his very real ambiguity but he is the



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entire population of the book. The other characters are vague shadows, hardly adequate to serve even as foils to Saul's introspection. This gives the book a hermetic quality that leaves it a little unsatisfactory, but it does have the great virtue of suggesting that racial problems can be placed in a context of thought that gives them just proportion without denying their importance. That is, at least, in the direction of the classic.

Beholding the Rich Panorama of Islam

Peter the Venerable and Islam. By James Kritzeck. Princeton University Press. $7.50.

by Gregor Roy

WHILE IT would be inaccurate to apply the term "renaissance" to the inchoate surge of intellectual energy which flooded the cloisters of the twelfth century, there was nevertheless in that age an uncommon passion for scholarship and philosophical disputation that makes it outstanding.

Through the monastic mists of the period looms the Abbey of Cluny, one of the leading spiritual and cultural capitals of Christendom: it achieved such historical stature mainly through the efforts of its ninth abbot, a remarkable man known to us as Peter the Venerable. He was responsible not only for many startling reforms within the Cluniac Foundation itself, but also for prying open the clenched eyes of mediaeval Catholicism that it might behold the rich panorama of creed and culture known as Islam.

This achievement was particularly notable in view of the veil of myth and mystery behind which the Moslem world lay hid; to rip away that veil, he planned, sponsored, and completed a mammoth project of translating into Latin for the first time some of the major Mohammedan texts, including the Koran itself, in order to scrutinize from original sources the religion and civilization of Islam. It is this project and the ramifications which branched out from its conception that James Kritzeck examines here in detail through the powerful lenses and delicate pince-nez of his scholarship.

The task, undertaken at Toledo by a team of five translators (the translations are called the Toledan Collection) had in fact a twin purpose: to dispel the appalling ignorance of Islamic doctrine on the part of Peter's co-religionists, and to refute Mohammedan dogma with the same ruthless logic as would be used against any heresy which tended to blight the purity of Christian teachings.

The first of these was successful, inasmuch as the Koran and other Moslem writings were at last exposed (albeit in sometimes inaccurate versions) to the perusal of Western scholars; the second goal was partially unsuccessful however, in that Peter's arguments against Islam did not delve deeply enough into the theological core of Mohammedanism.

To begin with, he tended to fall back too readily on the tradition of anti-heretical patristic authority to vindicate his attack on Moslem doctrine. His logic hovered over such targets as Islamic eschatology and Mohammed's prophethood without striking effectively. Moreover the abbot leaned too heavily on the efficacy of Old Testament prophecy as a dialogic prop.

Yet Peter never descended to cheap polemics in his disputation; in fact, his recognition that the ambivalent view of the Bible on the part of Islam is really the only valid foundation for the theological dichotomy between Christians and Moslems was a tremendously important outcome of the entire project. Also, Peter's respect for Islamic philosophy, coupled with his awareness of the nascent philosophical disputes of the age, which were to culminate in the bellowing of a certain Dumb Ox from Paris University, stands as a tribute to his intellectual integrity and perspicacity.

From the title of this book, one might expect to be confronted with yet another tedious tome washed onto the shores of ecclesiastical history. Instead, Dr. Kritzeck has provided us with a fascinating and lucid

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exposition of a difficult and complicated topic. Scholarly prose grunts and lumbers so often like a wounded Grendel that it is refreshing and illuminating to find an academician who writes well.

And it might also be said, from this book more than from Dr. Kritzeck's previous work on the subject, *Petrus Venerabilis*, we receive a vivid portrait of Peter as a man. While this image does not quite justify Etienne Gilson's adulatory opinion of Peter when he said of him *"il est parfait,"* the abbot comes through as a zealous ecumenical pioneer, a man rich in erudition and magnanimous in vision.

Nevertheless, I feel that Dr. Kritzeck tends to let Peter off the inquisitorial hook too readily at times. The scholar's defense of the abbot's lack of strong, overt opposition to the grim and gory gospel of the Crusades for example, is not quite convincing. We are told in this connection that "it was hardly to be expected that he would oppose the wishes of the papacy in these matters. He was willing to allow for the manias of his friends."

When one considers what took place during the Crusades, this exoneration makes one wonder how much leeway venerable abbots *should* give to papal maniacs, even if they are close friends.

Yet in the final analysis, any estimate of Peter as a Churchman must begin and end with the spirit behind his fervent conviction that the Moslems were not to be approached, in his own words, "as our people often do, by arms, but by words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love." By driving home this point so dramatically in such an excellent book, the brilliant Princeton scholar renders both abbot and reader an inestimable service.

REVIEWERS

Thomas Curley, a reviewer and critic for this and other journals, is the author of *Past Eve and Adam's* (Atheneum).

William James Smith, a regular contributor to THE COMMONWEAL, is a freelance writer and critic.

Gregor Roy received his M.A. in literature from the University of Glasgow and has published poems and reviews here and abroad.

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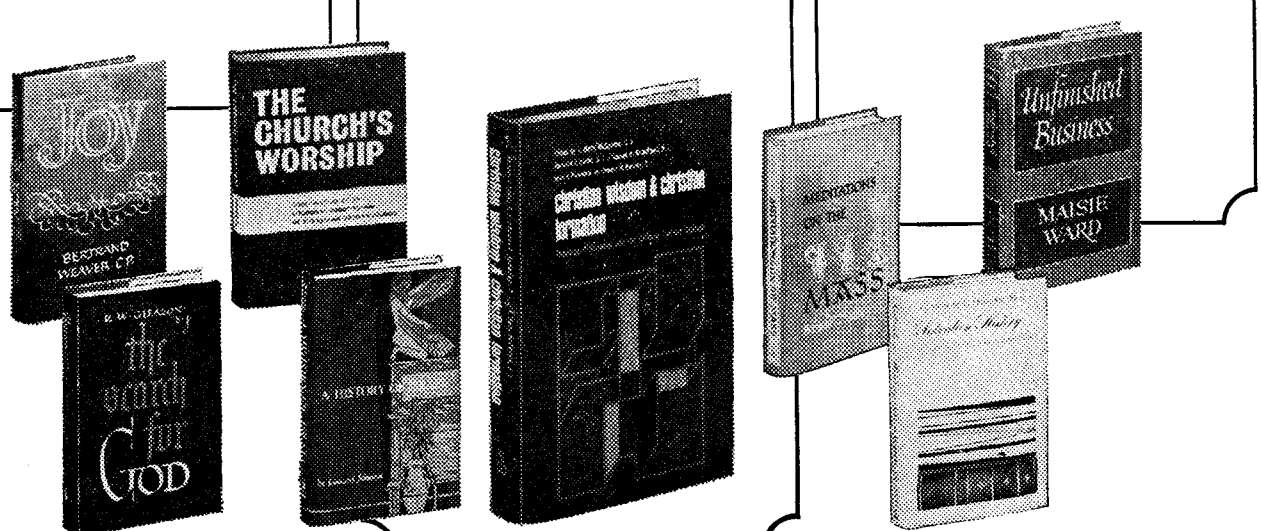

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